

July 29, 2013

News Release

For Immediate Release

Health Department marks 140 years of service

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department is marking 140 years of service to the community this month. On July 14, 1873, the City of Springfield established what was then known as the Department of Health. City of Springfield and Greene County health departments were combined about a century later in 1976.

Over the years, the health department has been at the center of various health and safety issues in the community. Many, such as the Spanish Influenza Pandemic of 1918, were serious threats to lives. Some, like aiding in the infamous search for loose cobras in 1953, were more about addressing panic than pandemics. From the 1940s through 2005, when the Jordan Valley Community Health Center took over the duties of the "City Clinic," the department focused in part on providing direct medical care the indigent and uninsured.

Today, the department's full-time staff of about 100 serves a combined population of approximately 277,000 people throughout Greene County. The department carries out its mission of helping people live longer, healthier happier lives through programs like immunizations, communicable disease tracking and an STD clinic; environmental programs such as restaurant inspections and animal control; and a nursing staff that aids high-risk infants and their families. The department's Women, Infants & Children (WIC) supplemental nutrition program is one of the largest in the state. The department has also placed a renewed focus on chronic disease prevention to help the community address issues such as diabetes, obesity, smoking and heart disease.

Throughout the coming weeks, the department's website will be updated with a timeline looking back at various episodes of public health history in Springfield and Greene County.